VISIT…

A QUESTION OF ETHICS

A short adventure for four 12th-level player characters

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Not all conflicts are straightforward. Not all decisions are easy. Two forces are at odds in this adventure, and neither is clearly good nor clearly evil. The player characters (PCs) must decide for themselves whom to aid—or not to aid.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and the *MONSTER MANUAL*® to use this adventure.

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase when appropriate. Unshaded boxes contain important information for you, including special instructions. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the text references the proper page in the *MONSTER MANUAL*.

A Question of Ethics uses a modified version of the Dungeon 1 map from the February 7, 2002, Map-a-Week feature on the D&D website. It is available for you to download at this url: <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/Dungeon1_sw2a_72.jpg>. The modified map is reprinted here for your convenience.

DMs should place this adventure in their own campaigns wherever appropriate. The best place would be in a town near some hills.

BACKGROUND

Six months ago, an adventuring group that calls itself the Company of the Shining Stone learned of an aged wizard's tomb that lay in the rocky foothills of a prominent mountain range, and sought to plunder it. What they were not counting on was that a band of stone giants would move into the immediate area to make their lair. The giants have rebuffed the company's attempts at getting past them and to their goal.

Now is the time of the annual fair in Adurath, a small town located not far from the tomb, and thus, the giants. The giants have no interest in the town or the tomb, but are instead interested in a rare mineral found only in that region. A few of the townsfolk have seen the giants, but there has been no confrontation other than between the giants and the Company of the Shining Stone.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Use one of the following hooks to get the player characters involved in the adventure:

- The player characters have come to Adurath for the fair. A wizard or sorcerer character may even want to participate in the Arcane Challenge (see below).
- After the Company of the Shining Stone convinces her that they are a real threat, Mayor Vesta Lictor contacts the player characters to deal with them.
- The player characters hear about the spread of the plague of red ribbons (see below) and come to help.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure can take many forms. Some player characters might choose to help the Company of the Shining Stone fight the stone giants. Some might assist the giants against the adventurers. Still others might want to help resolve the conflict. Some player characters won't want to get involved in the issue—but still might be interested in the outcome or in the uncovered tomb of the wizard, Harseth the Neverlost.

The material provided here includes the tools necessary for the Dungeon Master to handle the contingencies most likely to crop up in the scenario.

How it actually turns out is up to the players!

Town Statistics

♛ **Adurath (small town):** Conventional (mayor); AL LG; 800 gp limit; Assets 56,800 gp; Population 1,440; Mixed (1,170 humans, 136 halflings, 68 elves, 39 dwarves, 18 gnomes, 5 half-orcs, 4 half-elves).

Authority Figures: Vesta Lictor, human Com9. Vesta is the mayor of the town.

Thouslo the Six-Fingered, human War6. Thouslo, the chief constable in Adurath, has about six full-time warriors working for him to keep the peace and maintain safety. As many as 100 warriors and commoners are ready to heed a call of emergency.

Important Characters: Yelladin Nyst, human Clr5. Yelladin is a cleric of Pelor. Most people in Adurath respect him enough that his words carry a great deal of weight.

Stallis Silvereyes, elf Wiz9. As a wizard, Stallis sells potions and a few other magic items in town to earn her living.

Turat Hollow, dwarf Exp5. Turat is the local blacksmith.

Norris Testament, human Com4. The *Knight's Parlor* is the nicest inn in town. Norris owns the inn and tends bar. He employs five others to help with meals and upkeep.

Others: War1 (92); Clr2 (5); Clr1 (5); Drd4 (1); Drd1 (2); Exp2 (53); Exp1 (98); Ftr3 (1); Ftr2 (3); Ftr1 (6); Rog2 (10); Rog1 (29); Rgr1 (3); Com2 (131); Com1 (995).

THE FAIR OF ADURATH

Adurath burgeons with newcomers and locals filling the streets and the fairgrounds just north of town. Vendors sell colorful wooden toys and cloth streamers on sticks for children. Adults walk about with applewood roasted turkey drumsticks and oversized flagons of watery ale. Iced pears, candied apples, grilled vegetables and spiced beef on skewers, and small bags of heated chestnuts and endover seeds are all available for just a few coppers. Craftspeople from goldsmiths to glassblowers, tailors to coopers, cobblers to calligraphers display their wares in booths, from carts, or simply as they wander through the crowd. Minstrels, dancers, and gaudily dressed buffoons cavort and entertain the crowd, collecting a few coins for their talents.

Most exciting, however, is the heavily promoted Arcane Challenge, where wizards and sorcerers test their magical skills in various contests to show both power and finesse. Everyone waits eagerly for it to start.

The fair draws hundreds of visitors to Adurath. Thouslo and his warriors try to keep a sharp eye out for trouble—pickpockets, and the like. For the most part, the fair is simply three days of fun and food for all concerned.

The fair boasts a small zoo of exotic animals and beasts, like crocodiles, peacocks, and gazelles. There's even a stirge, a small monstrous spider, and a giant praying mantis. The central area of the fairgrounds boasts a wooden stage from which the mayor makes longwinded speeches, where actors put on plays, and officials hold various eating, singing, cooking, fighting, and dancing contests. There are also races of all sorts, and contests of skill and strength throughout the fair. While the archery competition is fierce, and the trophies offered in the fencing contests are highly sought, the most famous is the Arcane Challenge. (The DM should feel free to get non-mages involved in other contests.)

The Arcane Challenge

The Arcane Challenge has been held here for at least 20 years, and has become wildly popular among the attendees. The challenge, held on the first day of their fair, consists of three rounds. Each is based primarily on speed, although the three observing judges have the power to award discretionary bonus points for style and finesse. Magic items are allowed, but rarely earn points for style. No one may to cast spells on or in any way affect the other contestants or their actions. Anyone seen doing so is immediately disqualified and fined 100 gp for the town coffers.

In the first round, each contestant must destroy a huge boulder rolled down from the hills. Each boulder measures 12 feet across.

In the second round, a peacock feather is placed atop a 100-foot-tall wooden tower erected just for the fair. The tower is just wide enough for one person to stand atop it. The winner of this round is the contestant to retrieve the feather and bring it to a judge first.

The third round consists of a metal needle hidden within a haystack. All the contestants have their own haystack and needle to find. The first contestant to find his or her needle wins the round.

Each round is worth 10 points for first place, 6 points for second place, and 2 points for third place, although round two has only a first place (only one contestant can get the feather). Up to 3 points per round might be awarded for style.

The prize is a special magical trophy statuette of a wizard that is animated (as a Tiny object) to move as if casting a spell, and a fully charged *wand of detect magic*.

The Contestants

The Arcane Challenge has drawn two powerful mages in addition to the local Stallis Silvereyes. Stallis hopes to blast the boulder with *lightning bolts* in round one (her weakest event), use a *teleport* spell in round two (levitating down from the tower after she has the feather), and in round three hopes to find the needle with her secret weapon: a *rod of metal and mineral detection*.

Evran the Master Enchanter, a 10th-level human wizard, plans to deal with round one by summoning thoqquas to destroy the stone. He plans to use a *fly* spell to reach the top of the tower in round two, and a *gust of wind* to help with round three.

Vanorunca is a 12th-level gnomish sorcerer. She will use a pair of *disintegrate* spells in round one, a *fly* spell in round two, and a *locate object* spell in round three. (As a side note, Vanorunca is a descendant of Harseth the Neverlost, and would not like it at all if she learned that anyone had found his tomb and planned to plunder it.)

Running the Contest

If the PCs get involved in the Arcane Challenge, each round is held one hour apart. Roll initiative for each wizard or sorcerer involved (Stallis has a +1 bonus, Evran a +2 bonus, and Vanorunca has a +6 bonus). The NPCs cast the spells listed above. The PC(s) can cast whatever spells or use whatever items he or she desires. If there is no PC influence in the contest, Vanorunca wins.

The Company of the Shining Stone at the Fair

Two members of the company, Verrek and Murt, use the fair as a forum in which to spread worrisome rumors regarding the dangers that the stone giants pose to the community. "A whole warband of dangerous giants, seeking to pillage the town and steal all the valuables, allowed to live so close? The town's heroes should band together and attack these monsters before they slaughter innocents and steal livestock."

Gistrontal, the group's wizard, does not get involved in the Arcane Challenge. Instead, he uses his reputation and influence to be selected as one of the event's three judges, along with Yelladin Nyst and Mayor Vesta Lictor. He uses this position as a pulpit to warn influential people in town about the threat of the giants.

Taragana, the company's rogue, is no mere pickpocket. She does not use her skills to steal from commoners. On the other hand, she is less motivated than her fellows to do anything at the fair other than enjoy herself. For example, she participates in the archery competition.

The Plague of Red Ribbons

The fair's second day is marred by dire news. Herders from the plains to the south come into town bearing tales of a terrible sickness spreading through their region. Known as the plague of red ribbons, this horrible disease literally inflicts terrible wounds from the inside out, gaining its name from the bloody rents it rips in the victim's body. The disease normally takes only a few days to kill even the hardiest of souls.

The disease has an incubation period of only one day. It spreads through contact with the corpses or the blood of the infected. The Fortitude DC for the disease

is 25, and it inflicts 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage each day.

Yelladin Nyst, cleric of Pelor, makes sure these herders don't carry the plague with them. Even as he deals with that task, word spreads that sheep in herds as close as 10 miles from the town are afflicted. The PCs can go help with *cure disease* spells, if they like. If they do, they are that much more likely to spot the Company of the Shining Stone carrying out their plan (Spot check, DC 15); see "The Quandary".

THE COMPANY OF THE SHINING STONE (EL 13)

Known throughout the nearby regions as a capable and stalwart band of adventurers and treasure-finders, the Company of the Shining Stone possesses great power as well as experience in working together. They are not evil, but they are ruthless when it comes to achieving the goals they have made for themselves. The company's name comes from the *continual flame* stones that each of them carries, made by Gistrontal.

Verrek: Male half-orc Bbn9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d12+9; hp 67; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Atk +15/+10 melee (1d12+8 plus 1d6 cold/19–20/x3, *+1 frost greataxe*); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, rage 3/day, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (leatherworking) +11, Heal +4, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Ride (horse) +11, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Critical (greataxe), Power Attack.

Rage: The following changes to the above statistics are in effect while Verrek rages: HD 9d12+27; hp 85; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13; Atk +17/+12 melee (1d12+11 plus 1d6 cold/19–20/x3, *+1 frost greataxe*); SV Fort +9, Will +7; Str 25, Con 17; Swim +13. He may voluntarily end the rage prematurely. After raging, Verrek is fatigued (–2 Strength, –2 Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of that encounter. He can fly into a rage only once per encounter and only three times per day. Entering a rage takes no time by itself, but the barbarian can do it only during his action, not in response to someone else's action. His rage lasts for 6 rounds.

Possessions: *+1 frost greataxe, +1 studded leather armor, periapt of health, potions of neutralize poison* and *cure serious wounds*, 11 gp.

Murt: Male dwarf Ftr9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d10+27; hp 76; Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 23; Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+6/17–20, *+1 longsword*), or +9 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SQ Dwarf traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Craft (metalworking) +4, Craft (stoneworking) +15, Listen +3, Ride (horse) +12, Spot +4, Use Rope +6; Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Improved Critical (longsword), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Dwarf Traits: Murt has a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids, a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities, a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against all poisons, and a +4 dodge bonus against giants. He has darkvision (60-foot range) and stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual stonework; can make a check for unusual stonework as though actively searching when within 10 ft. and can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can; intuit depth). Murt also has a +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks and Craft or Profession checks related to stone or metal (these bonuses are already figured into the statistics above).

Possessions: Heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *+1 longsword, +1 plate armor, +2 large steel shield, rope of climbing, potions of aid* and *lesser restoration*, 49 gp.

Gistrontal: Male elf Wiz9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d4+9; hp 34; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff); SQ Elf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 7, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +14, Bluff +3, Concentration +12, Escape Artist +4, Hide +5, Listen +0, Perform +8, Scry +14, Search +6, Spellcraft +15, Spot +0; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Enchantment).

Elf Traits: Gistrontal is immune to magic sleep spells and effects, and he has a +2 racial bonus on saves against enchantment spells or effects. As an elf, he has low-light vision (can see twice as far as a human in low-light conditions). He is entitled to a Search check when within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door as though actively looking for it. Gistronal is proficient with the composite longbow, composite shortbow, longbow, longsword, and rapier, and he has a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level, or 16 + spell level for Enchantment spells): 0—

daze, detect magic, flare, mage hand; 1st—*charm person* (2), *magic missile* (2), *shield;* 2nd—*blur, cat's grace, invisibility, mirror image, see invisibility;* 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball, haste, suggestion;* 4th—*confusion, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other;* 5th—empowered *lightning bolt.*

Spellbook: 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*burning hands, charm person, feather fall, identify, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep, true strike, unseen servant;* 2nd—*blur, cat's grace, invisibility, levitate, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, scare, see invisibility, web;* 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball, fly, haste, lightning bolt, nondetection, phantom steed, suggestion, summon monster III;* 4th—*confusion, Evard's black tentacles, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other, polymorph self;* 5th—*cone of cold, dominate person, hold monster, passwall.*

Possessions: *Wand of summon monster III* (14 charges), *wand of mage armor* (25 charges), *cloak of resistance +1, pearl of power* (2nd-level spell), *potion of cure light wounds*, scroll of *invisibility, cone of cold*, scroll of *fly*, quarterstaff, gold ring with tiger eye worth 400 gp, 546 gp.

Taragana: Female halfling Rog9; CR 9; Small humanoid; HD 9d6+9; hp 46; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger), or +13/+8 ranged (1d6+2/x3, *+1 mighty composite shortbow* [+1 Str bonus] with masterwork arrows); SA Sneak attack +5d6; SQ Evasion, halfling traits, traps, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Climb +15, Diplomacy +10, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +9, Hide +7, Intimidate +12, Intuit Direction +10, Jump +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +17, Open Lock +14, Perform +10, Use Magic Device +6; Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite shortbow).

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Taragana takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Halfling Traits: Targana has a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear, a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws, a +1 racial attack bonus with a thrown weapon, and a +2 racial bonus on Climb, Jump, Listen, and Move Silently checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Possessions: *+1 mighty composite shortbow* (+1 Str bonus), *+1 leather armor, deck of illusions*, 20 masterwork arrows, masterwork dagger, 60 gp.

Tactics

Whenever they are in a dangerous situation, Gistrontal has *mage armor, cat's grace,* and probably *shield* cast, giving him AC 25 and a +1 bonus to Reflex saves and Dexterity skills. The first spell he casts in combat is *haste* (thus making him AC 29), followed probably by *mirror image.* He acts very defensively. Murt and Verrek, however, both charge quickly into battle. Taragana prefers to make ranged attacks with her bow. She also uses her *deck of illusions* to confuse and surprise, allowing her to move into a place where she can make sneak attacks.

The Quandary

The Company of the Shining Stone wants to inflict the plague upon the stone giants. Even with their impressive fortitude, more giants than not will fall victim to this disease, weakening many and perhaps even killing a few.

The player characters can discover this when they notice (Spot, DC 15) Gistrontal and Murt speaking with the herders from the south. If the PCs pay any attention to this at all, they see Murt and Verrek head off to the south on horseback (Murt on a pony). They are hunting for an infected sheep. Verrek, wearing his *periapt of health*, grabs one of the diseased animals, kills it if it is not already dead, and puts it in a watertight leather bag that they hope will contain the infection (it is not foolproof—within a day, Verrek's horse comes down with the disease). They aren't actually stealing the sheep, as the herders have said they are happy to be rid of the infected creatures.

The company does nothing to endanger the people of Adurath. They keep the diseased sheep far from the town, planning to sneak it into the stone giant camp that very night, then return to get checked out by local clerics to make sure they are free of disease.

If the PCs attempt to intervene, the Company of the Shining Stone does not react with immediate violence, instead attempting to reason with the group to get them to see their point of view. At first, they give no mention of the wizard's tomb, instead speaking of the danger the giants pose. Only when that does not work do they offer the PCs a cut in the treasure within the tomb once the giants are out of the way.

The company brooks no delay, however, for they are (justifiably) very afraid of the disease and having the infected sheep near them or the town. A misstep by anyone involved could risk spreading the plague. If forced to, the Company of the Shining Stone uses force to deal with those who might interfere.

Negotiating with the Company

The members of the Company of the Shining Stone assume that the PCs will take their side against the giants. They willingly, gratefully accept help against the giants, and will turn away from the plague plan if the PCs volunteer to help slay and drive off the giants through more conventional means. They only reluctantly tell the PCs about the tomb, if they believe that is the only way they'll get at it—that is, if the PCs seem intent on stopping them from killing the giants.

Verrek is quick to anger and the first to resort to violence. Taragana is the least sold on the plan to wipe out the giants and the most likely to agree with the PCs if they attempt to stop the Company of the Shining Stone. However, she will not betray her friends and defends them with her life if they come under attack. Murt and Gistrontal might listen to reason if the PCs offer a viable, well-spoken alternative solution (Diplomacy check, DC 20). The key here is that the PCs need to suggest an alternative plan.

The DM should keep in mind that the members of the company do indeed believe the giants pose a real danger to the town and that reasoning with them is out of the question. The Company of the Shining Stone has been very influenced by a bad encounter with a stone giant in a dungeon a few years ago.

THE GIANTS (EL 15)

Originally from deep within the nearby mountains, a band of stone giants has come to the region seeking a rare mineral. Amar, the stone giant elder, recently learned from his dying father (the previous elder) that a secret formation of tintibulium lies in the hills near the human village of Adurath.

Tintibulium possesses the unique property of full immunity to sonic energy. That means that not only can it be made into items immune to sonics, but it also can be used to make soundproof walls and containers. It is worth twice as much as its weight in gold, and is much rarer.

The giants have set up camp—purely by coincidence—near the entrance to the tomb of Harseth the Neverlost. They roam the hills from there, seeking the mineral, but so far have found nothing.

Each stone giant has a huge greatclub, 1d6+3 throwing rocks, and a bag as described in the *Monster Manual*, page 99, as well as 1d10+100 gp. Two have *potions of cure moderate wounds*, three have *potions of endurance*, two have *potions of cure light wounds*, and one has a *potion of see invisibility*.

Two young stone giants accompany the others. They have the statistics of ogres with an additional +2 natural armor bonus to their Armor Class.

Young Stone Giants (2): hp 29, 33; see *Monster Manual*, page 44

Stone Giants (8): hp 98, 110, 115, 120, 124, 135, 141, 153; see *Monster Manual*, page 98.

Amar: Male stone giant elder Sor3; CR 11; Large giant (Earth); HD 14d8+56, 3d4+12; hp 138; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (2d6+10, Huge greatclub), or +12 ranged (1d6+7, rock); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., rock catching; AL LN; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Concentration +7, Hide +5, Jump +10, Profession (guide) +4, Scry +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +4; Brew Potion, Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot.

Rock Throwing (Ex): Amar receives a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when throwing rocks (already figured into the statistics above). He can hurl rocks weighing from 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects) up to 5 range increments (180-foot range increment).

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day—*stone shape, stone tell,* and either *transmute rock to mud* or *transmute mud to rock.* Caster level 10th; save DC 12 + spell level.

Rock Catching (Ex): Amar can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, when he would normally be hit by a rock, he can make a Reflex save with a +4 racial bonus to catch it instead. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium-size rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus on attack rolls, the DC increases by that amount. Amar must be ready for and aware of the attack.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*ghost sound, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost;* 1st—grease, magic missile, shield.

Possessions: *Wand of bull's strength* (22 charges), *potion of cure serious wounds*, Huge greatclub, seven throwing rocks, 145 gp.

Spells Known (6/6): 0—*ghost sound, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost;* 1st—*grease, magic missile, shield.*

Spell-like Abilities: As a 10th-level sorcerer. 1/day—*stone shape, stone tell,* and either *transmute rock to mud* or *transmute mud to rock.*

Tactics

In a fight, the giants are quick to defend themselves. They attack any possible threat, rather than risking being fooled. Most of them fight with straightforward tactics—about half charge within reach and batter their enemies, while the other half hurls stones. With advance warning, Amar casts *bull's strength* on as many giants as he can. He casts *shield* on himself and then joins his comrades in melee.

The Giants' Camp

About 6 miles from Adurath the giants have established a semi-permanent camp from which to make their exploratory forays into the surrounding hills, looking for a formation of tintibulium. They have a single large, hide tent in which Amar sleeps and they store their food, water and a few other basic supplies, including digging tools. The rest sleep outside, under the numerous large trees or simply in the open.

About a week earlier, the Company of the Shining Stone sneaked through the camp, found the tomb's entrance, and dispelled the illusion that made it look like a normal patch of rocky hillside. In doing so, they were spotted by the giants, who saw them as invaders. A short battle ensued, and the Company of the Shining Stone retreated.

Afterward, the giants peeked into the tomb, but figured (correctly) that it was full of narrow corridors and traps and determined that they wanted no part of it. However, they have no intention of letting the Company of the Shining Stone get in either, after the attack.

Negotiating with the Giants

The first difficulty is that the giants speak only Giant. If the PCs can overcome the language barrier, the best they can hope for is to convince the giants to move their camp elsewhere.

This requires not only a good reason (one that matters to giants) but a well-spoken one as well (Diplomacy check, DC 22). If the PCs reveal that they are doing this on behalf of the Company of the Shining Stone, whom the giants already see as enemies, the check suffers a –4 circumstance penalty.

THE TOMB OF HARSETH THE NEVERLOST

Harseth the Neverlost was a powerful wizard who, before he succumbed to natural death, created a tomb that would remain both well hidden and well warded, to keep away those who would plunder his riches. Although some of the statues in the place belie his true stature, Harseth was a gnome.

Recently, the Company of the Shining Stone discovered the tomb's entrance and dispelled the illusion that concealed it. However, no one has yet explored the depths of the place.

The tomb feels fairly cramped in places. All ceilings, unless otherwise indicated, are only 10 feet high. All doors are stone (hardness 8, 60 hp, Break DC 28) and slide into the floor controlled by a stone lever to the right side. Each square on the map of the tomb equals 5 feet.

1. Entrance

An arched entryway leads into the hillside. Obscured by trees and large boulders, it does not appear that anyone has used this entrance in over a hundred years.

This is also the site of the stone giants' camp. See above.

2. Harseth's Legacy

A statue of a human man, made of white stone, stands upon a pedestal in this hexagonal room. The figure is 18 feet tall, almost reaching the 20-foot ceiling. The robes the man wears seem faceted, like a jewel. He clutches a scepter in his left hand and a book in his right.

The magical statue is has two very different powers. The first is a blessing conferred upon all arcane spellcasters who touch the statue and say the name "Harseth". Those doing so gain a +1 bonus to the caster level of their next spell cast, no matter how long it is before they cast it.

The second involves the rolling rocks that come down the corridor from the crushing stone trap in Area 5. When a rolling rock touches the statue, the rock immediately disintegrates.

Development

If anyone leaves this room and heads east, the stone golem in Area 3 moves to intercept and attack. If anyone leaves this area and heads west, the trap in

Area 5 activates, sending a rolling rock to crush intruders.

3. Guardian (EL 11)

This room is empty except for a white stone statue, placed in the middle of the chamber. It depicts an 8-foot-tall figure in a strangely faceted, angular robe, with his hands poised as if to cast a spell.

The statue is actually a stone golem. It's likely that the PCs don't see the statue in the room, however, for if they leave Area 2 and head east, the golem moves to attack. It probably reaches them in the corridor.

Stone Golem: hp 80; see *Monster Manual*, page 108.

Tactics

The golem can very effectively block the 5-foot-wide corridor, using its slow power to make it even more difficult for anyone to get past it.

4. Library of Lost Lore

This cramped chamber is about 15 feet wide and almost 10 feet deep. Opposite the door, an alcove hosts another stone statue of a man in a faceted robe. He clutches an open book in his hands and stares intently at the contents. Bookshelves filled with books line all the remaining walls. A glass panel protects the shelves and seems to have preserved the aging books. No means to open or bypass the glass makes itself apparent.

The glass is magically reinforced, with a hardness of 5, 40 hp, and a Break DC 25. If the glass breaks, the books immediately age and crumble, becoming useless.

However, someone searching the floor (DC 25) may find a small trigger stone that lowers the glass into the floor (and raises it again if activated). If the PCs use the hidden trigger, the books do not decay. None are magical, but most of them deal with magic of various kinds. The entire collection of about 100 books commands a value of 4,000 gp.

5. Trap (EL 8)

Complex iron mechanisms fill this room. They seem centered around moving large cylindrical stones to the middle of the room and setting them into a launching ramp in front of the door.

The whole purpose of this room is to launch cylindrical, rolling stones down the corridor to the east. Triggers on the floor 5 feet and 25 feet from the east end of the long hall leading to this chamber cause the door into this room to open and a stone to come rolling out. The rolling stone moves at a speed of 50, which means it moves 100 feet in a round. Since the corridor is 50 feet long, the stone potentially strikes anyone in the hall. Since there are two triggers, a character or characters could trigger two stones to come at them before they even realized it. (The stones are carved with a groove in just the right spot so they do not trip the triggers.)

Characters in the path of a rolling rock suffer 10d6 points of damage (a Reflex saving throw halves the damage, indicating that the character was "pushed" back to Area 2 rather than rolled over). However, the stones themselves also carry a magical trap, triggered the first time they strike a living character. The struck character must succeed at a Fortitude save or be petrified—and then crushed by the rock, smashed to a million pieces.

When the rock touches the statue in area 2, the rock immediately disintegrates. The trap then resets with a new stone in the mechanism. The trap can function up to five times.

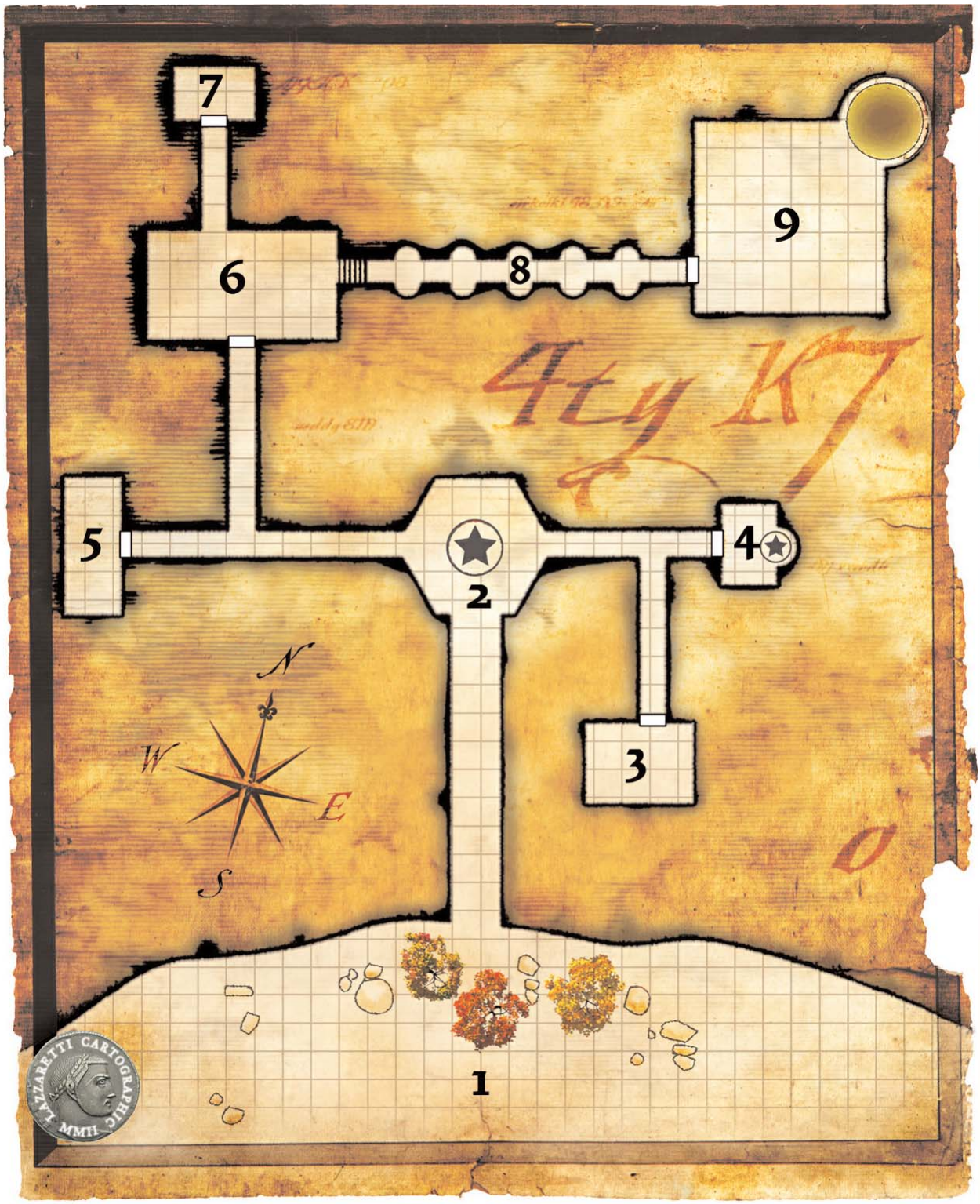
Crushing Rock Trap: CR 8; 10d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 24 half) to all in corridor and petrification to the first victim (Fort DC 19 avoids); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

6. Hall of Great Fortune (EL 7)

The door to the south is trapped. Anyone opening the door triggers the trap, which blasts a heightened, maximized lightning bolt down the corridor's 40-foot length.

Lightning Trap: CR 7; 60 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 19 half); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

When someone springs the trap, a *magic mouth* spell activates and speaks: "Return from whence you came, or face the dire wrath of Harseth the Neverlost."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When PCs get the door open, read the following description:

> You see a small room, about 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep, filled with an ancient stone sarcophagus and a number of bronze urns. The sarcophagus looks small, as if sized for a person about 3 feet tall. Mystic runes cover the top.

This is an illusion, a permanent *screen* spell. PCs who investigate the contents of the room gain a Will save (DC 22) to determine that it is not real.

If the characters bypass the illusion, read the following text:

> The room is actually about 35 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The ceiling is vaulted, almost 25 feet above the floor at the highest point. All manner of urns, boxes, chests, and various goods are stored here. Expensive silks, rare woods, and art objects also decorate the room.

These things are all treasures amassed by Harseth, and all of them seem large and bulky. Many, such as the silks, the rare wood, and the paintings have lost their value due to age and decay. Likewise with much of the contents of the containers: The incense, spices, rare and expensive foods, oils, perfumes, and more—all are now worthless. The following objects still retain value:

- Gold box (worth 275 gp) holding now spoiled and worthless spices
- Bronze and ebony urn (worth 130 gp) holding now stagnant and worthless perfumed water
- Small silver idol of a pegasus (worth 200 gp)
- Silver mesh net with small sapphires woven into it (worth 480 gp)
- A suit of masterwork plate armor (sized for a gnome)
- Six masterwork short swords and three masterwork small shields, all hanging on the walls

7. The Tomb (EL 6)

The hallway between Areas 6 and 7 is trapped with an enchantment (Will save, DC 22) so that those affected by it believe they are walking straight north (from Area 6 to 7) but actually turn around unknowingly and end up back in Area 6. This effect cannot be disabled, but it can be dispelled (caster level 15).

The door of the tomb is sealed with an *arcane lock* and trapped with a heightened *fireball* effect triggered when the door opens. The blast only spreads south, however, not north into the tomb itself.

Fireball Trap: CR 6; 10d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 19 half) 20 feet down the corridor; Search DC 31; Disable DC 31.

> You see a small room, about 15 feet wide and 10 feet deep, filled with an ancient stone sarcophagus and a number of bronze urns. The sarcophagus is small, as if sized for a person about 3 feet tall. Mystic runes cover the top.

This time, it's no illusion. This is truly Harseth's tomb. He was buried with some of the great treasures he possessed in life, although Harseth has sealed no treasure in his sarcophagus. The six bronze urns, worth 50 gp apiece, each hold 200 gp. A small coffer holds a 1,000 gp platinum necklace, two 300 gp sapphire rings, and a pearl bracelet worth 400 gp.

A secret panel in the north wall (Search, DC 23, to find) hides *robes of scintillating colors* hanging on a hook. A secret compartment in the floor (Search, DC 23 to find) holds a *wand of major image* (24 charges) and a *ring of protection* +2, both wrapped in cloth.

8. The Corridor of *Symbols* (EL 14)

> A corridor stretches from east to west. It looks about 65 feet long, with stairs going up on the west end and a door on the east. Spaced approximately 5 feet apart, shallow alcoves on either side of the hall hold shelves with tiny idols.

Each alcove holds a small clay statue of a gnomish wizard flourishing a wand. Each set of alcoves holds a magical *symbol* between them, inscribed in the air and triggered when any living creature comes within 5 feet of it. There are five pairs of alcoves and five *symbols*. Going from west to east, the *symbols* are:

1. Death
2. Pain
3. Insanity
4. Fear
5. Death

In each case, the saving throw is DC 22.

9. The Magic Pool

The door is *arcane locked*.

In this 35-foot-square chamber, a round area approximately 12 feet across extends from the northeast corner. Strange crystalline formations of bluish-purple stone jut from the floor, walls, and ceiling, many surrounded with broken bits of stone, as though the crystals thrust their way into this room after it was built. Even the pool has a bluish-purple hue.

This was Harseth's pride and joy, a magical pool that revived prepared spells like a *pearl of power* when a person drank from it. The pool's magic, however, has decayed over time and has been completely corrupted by the tintibulium crystalline formations which have thrust their way into this room as they grew—such is the nature of the strange mineral. Now the water in the pool is poisonous (Fortitude save, DC 16, 1d6 points of Strength damage).

This room contains the tintibulium formation the stone giants seek.

CONCLUSION

Potentially, the PCs may have brokered a truce and a deal between the Company of the Shining Stone and the giants. If this occurred, everyone can get what they want: The adventurers get to plunder Harseth's tomb, and the giants get access to the tintibulium.

In any event, if the player characters befriended either the adventurers or the giants—or both—they have earned longtime allies. If they help at all to keep the plague away from the town, they have earned the gratitude of Adurath's population as well.

If the PCs fought against the Company of the Shining Stone, those characters hold a grudge for a long time, and seek revenge. Perhaps it comes not in the form of an outright attack (but it might, depending on how much harm the PCs inflicted), but in other ways. They use their reputation to spread lies and rumors about the PCs. They spy on the player characters and attempt to ruin some plan of theirs later on—an "eye for an eye," so to speak. It will be difficult for the PCs to convince the people of Adurath that they did the right thing in opposing the popular company and aiding the frightening giants.

If the player characters fought against the giants, the larger tribe from which this band hails eventually comes to Adurath seeking vengeance for what they consider an unprovoked attack. The PCs might need to return to defend the town against an actual giant attack.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. In the employ of Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked with the *Rolemaster* and *Champions* games as an editor, developer, and designer.

In 1994 Monte came to work at TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the new edition of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and authored the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. His recent Wizards releases include *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil* and the *Call of Cthulhu d20 Role-playing Game*.

A graduate of the Clarion West writer's workshop, Monte has also published short stories and two novels. In his spare time, he runs anywhere from one to three games per week, holds a yearly game convention at his house, builds vast dioramas out of LEGO building bricks, and reads a lot of comics.

Monte designed the May through August 2001 adventures and the April 2002 adventure for the Official D&D Website. To read more of his recent work and find out about his own d20 imprint, Malhavoc Press, visit his website at <www.montecook.com>.